

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-13 ADP-00 DPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

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FM USINT CAIRO

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1931

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MOPS IS SY EG

SUBJECT: ISRAEL/ EGYPT POW EXCHANGE

REF: JERUSALEM 620 (NOTAL) TEL AVIV 4379

1. ON JUNE 26 DEPARTING ICRC CAIRO REP DE BEAUMONT
TOLD USINTOFF THAT AT LUNCH GIVEN IN HIS HONOR BY GOE
MILITARY LIAISON STAFF, ALSO ATTENDED BY FOREIGN
MINISTRY OFFICIALS, CONVERSATION HAD COME AROUND
TO GENERAL SUBJECT OF POW EXCHANGES. MUCH OF EGYPTIANS'
FOCUS WAS ON POLITICAL HANDLING OF POW ISSUE BY NORTH
VIETNAMESE. FACT THAT US HAD GIVEN MAJOR IMPORTANCE
TO POW ISSUE IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH NORTH VIETNAMESE
HAD, THEY THOUGHT, GIVEN HANOI A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT
WITH WHICH TO EXTRACT CONCESSIONS FROM US. DE BEAUMONT
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SAID THAT EGYPTIANS DID NOT SEEM TO BELIEVE THE TEN ISRAELI POW' S IN THEIR OWN HANDS WERE MAJOR INSTRUMENT OF PRESSURE ON ISRAEL, BUT THEY COULD NOT AVOID TAKING NOTE OF IMMENSE PUBLICITY WHICH ISRAELIS GAVE TO EACH PRISONER RELEASE WHICH OCCURRED.

2. DE BEAUMONT' S THREE YEARS IN EGYPT HAD CONVINCED HIM THAT TRIUMPHAL RECEPTION BY ISRAELIS OF RELEASED PRISONERS WAS MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF OTHERS. CASE IN POINT WAS PARTIAL EXCHANGE OF EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELIS WHICH WAS TO HAVE OCCURED JUNE 8 (PARA 1 JERUSALEM REFTEL). ONE ISRAELI PRISONER WAS TO HAVE BEEN EXCHANGED FOR FOURTEEN EGYPTIANS AT THAT TIME, BUT RELEASE OF SYRIANS WITHOUT ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE OF GOE, AND SUBSEQUENT PUBLICITY BY ISRAELIS, KILLED A DEAL WHICH HAD TAKEN MANY MONTHS TO PUT TOGETHER. (HE DID NOT MENTION INTERVENTION BY SYRIAN DEFENSE MINISTER.)

3. DE BEAUMONT SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN EGYPTIAN FLEXIBILITY ON RELEASE OF THE FOUR ISRAELI NON- PILOT PRISONERS IN EGYPTIAN HANDS, AND THERE MIGHT STILL BE IF THE ISSUE COULD BE HANDLED IN ABSOLUTE SECRECY. HE WAS NOT ENCOURAGING ABOUT SIX PILOT PRISONERS. HE THOUGHT EGYPTIANS HAD GOTTEN HUNG UP ON NASSER' S PROMISE MADE IN REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY SPEECH OF JULY 23, 1970, THAT ISRAELI PILOTS WOULD NOT BE RELEASED.

4. REGARDING GENERAL CONDITION OF ISRAELI POW' S IN EGYPT, DE BEAUMONT SAID THAT THEIR HEALTH WAS GOOD, THEY WERE GENERALLY BETTER TREATED THAN EGYPTIAN PRISONERS. THEY WERE PERMITTED BOOKS, RADIOS, AND HAD TV SETS AND STOVES INSTALLED IN THEIR ROOMS. TO B MAN THEY HAD REFUSED TO EAT EGYPTIAN FOOD PREPARED FOR THEM, AND WERE LIVING OFF SUPPLIES WHICH, DE BEAUMONT INDICATED, WERE PROVIDED THROUGH ICRC. WILEY

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